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THE EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND TENURE OF THE TEACHING POPULATION. II

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C. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE TEACHING POPULATION

The data to be found on the experience of the teaching population are likewise meager and difficult to obtain. Foght found that the average age of the rural teacher when beginning was 19.2 years, which would preclude a very wide acquaintance with the social or intellectual environment and organization of the school. Coffman states that "every third man and every second woman engaged in teaching is under twenty-four years of age. At least one-half of the teachers of this country are little more than boys and girls" (10, p. 235). Not only is there this lack of maturity and lack of academic and professional preparation, but the length of time spent in teaching is insufficient to get beyond the crude apprenticeship stage. Coffman states that one-fourth of the teachers have had only one year of experience, and one-half have had four years or less. Coffman and Jessup concluded from their study of the teachers in the high schools of the North Central Association that "the immaturity and lack of wide experience is shown by the fact that 13 per cent of these teachers have had one year's experience or less; 20 per cent have had two years'; 29 per cent have had three years' experience or less. In cities of 2,500 and under, one-half had under three years; 5,000 and under, one-half less than four years; the median experience ranges from three to eight years, the more experienced being in the large cities" (15, p. 98). Shideler found that the percentage of teachers without experience varied indirectly, and the median years of experience varied directly, with the size of the city. Cities of 2,500 or less had a much larger percentage of inexperienced teachers, and the median years of experience was also much less than for larger cities (7). Coffman found that 77

per cent of the rural teachers, 44 per cent of the town teachers, 44.65 per cent of the teachers in cities of 8,000 and over, and 28.6 per cent in cities of 100,000 and over teach five years or less (11).

Table IV presents the percentage of teachers with the number of years' experience from the few states that furnished complete data. From this table it may be noted that the central tendency is three years or less. The black bars in Chart IV represent the percentage of teachers with three years' experience or less and the figures in the unshaded part give the percentage with more than three years' experience. The average of the ten cases is 50 per cent with three years' experience or less.

TABLE IV
NUMBER OF YEARS' EXPERIENCE
(Figures show percentages)

State	Less than One Year	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	Four Years	Five or More Years	Total Three Years or Less
Iowa (1915).....	24.4	12.9	12.7	9.5	9.4	31	59.6
Louisiana (1913-14).....		15	15	15	11	44	45
Missouri (1913-14).....	14	12	11	10	8	45	47
Missouri (1915):							
Town.....	8	8	9	7	8	60	32
Country.....	23	18	14	10	8	27	65
Wisconsin (1915):							
Rural.....		28	21	15	11	25	64
State graded.....		12	11	15	13	49	37
Grades below high school.....		19	17	13	10	41	49
High school in country.....		23	16	14	9	38	53
High school in city.....		19	16.4	14.3	9.6	40.7	49.7

Just how much value should be placed upon experience in the measurement of teaching efficiency seems debatable. Coffman holds that the greatest correlation between teaching and salary is at six years; increase in salary after six years depends on factors other than experience (11). Boyce maintains that teaching experience is less important than instructional skill, studiousness, or discipline. However, "experience is an important factor in modifying teaching ability. No elementary-school teacher ranked first or second with less than five years of experience. Among high-school teachers three years was the maximum for good teachers. The average experience of elementary-school teachers for the first and

second classes was 13 years, and for the last two classes 8.5 years. The average experience of high-school teachers for these corresponding groups was 11.8 years and 6.39 years, respectively" (16, p. 156). According to Ruediger and Strayer:

The positive correlation between length of service and general merit is significant. . . . No teacher ranked either first or second who had taught less than five years, and only 4 per cent had taught more than 25 years. . . . 70 per cent of the teachers in the first rank, 69 per cent of those in the second rank, 40 per cent of those in the second lowest rank, 30 per cent of those in the lowest rank, had taught 10 years or more. This indicates either that teachers keep on improving and passing on to higher rank, for at least ten years, or that the poorest teachers are gradually eliminated from the service. Both factors play a part. From the figures as a whole one may infer that a teacher in the grades reaches first-class efficiency in about five years, and that she maintains this efficiency for about 20 years, and that after about 25 years of service she begins to decline [17, p. 276].

Thorndike holds that experience beyond the fourth or fifth year does not add greatly to the efficiency of the public-school teacher. Yet "the premium on experience has the administrative advantage of encouraging the adoption of teaching as a permanent profession and of preventing frequent changes in the local teaching staff" (18, p. 41).

D. STANDARDS OF QUALIFICATION

A comparison of the educational qualifications and tenure of our teaching population with that of some of the continental countries may aid us in understanding what ought to be our standard of qualification. The rise of modern Germany to a vantage point in every field of activity in the world's work is due to an effective school system and a thoroughly trained corps of schoolmasters. Since the Franco-Prussian War, France has reorganized her schools and trained her teachers for the rejuvenation of her national resources. But we need not limit ourselves to these two world-powers whose present prowess is the result of intensive education: the two small nations, Switzerland and Denmark, afford ample material to prove that the real wealth of a nation lies, not in the abundance of its natural resources, but in a thrifty, intelligent people.

The following short citation from Professor Tate's study of Swiss schools presents a sharp contrast to our teacher problem:

To an American one of the most impressive things connected with the Swiss school system is the stability of the teaching profession. Three-fourths of the teachers are men, and practically all the teachers whom I met have engaged in the business as a life-work. Teaching is rarely used as a stepping-stone to some other profession. There is very little shifting of the teaching force from place to place. I spent ten days with a school inspector in Canton Berne. He has 240 teachers under his supervision; only 12 of them were teaching for the first year in the position which they held. It is no unusual thing for a teacher to spend a long life in one position.

Admission to the teaching profession usually means graduation from the teacher's seminary, which requires for entering an eight- or nine-year course offered in the common schools. Teachers in the Gymnasium or the Middle Schools are usually university graduates. After securing a certificate the Swiss teacher usually acts as a substitute for a year or two before finally being elected to a permanent position [19, p. 27].

Within the last half-century the decadent life of Denmark has been rejuvenated through the work of her schools with an efficient corps of teachers. These teachers must have completed the course of study at the normal school or university before being appointed permanent teachers; non-graduates may serve as apprentice teachers or assistants, but not as regular teachers. Out of 3,812 men, only 141 were non-graduates; out of 1,453 women, 438 were non-graduates. Out of a total of 5,265 teachers, 579 were non-graduates. This presents a sharp contrast to our condition; Louisiana (1913-14), for example, has approximately the same number of teachers, 5,658, yet 3,264 are non-graduates. A second contrast is with regard to the maturity of the Danish teachers. Men teachers twenty-four years old or under constitute only 7 per cent of the total; twenty-nine years old or under, 20 per cent; thirty-nine years old or under, 50 per cent: that is, half of the men teachers are forty years old or over, mature men giving instruction to youth. Women teachers twenty-four years old or under constitute 23 per cent; twenty-nine years or under, 48 per cent: that is, over half of the women teachers are more than thirty years old, and are mature enough to be real leaders in the life-problems of youth (see p. 18). Since teaching is a permanent

profession, the teachers feel that it is worth while to grow up with a place, and seldom serve less than ten years in the same community.

Professional training and long tenures have been wrought with great influence on the rural community life. The teachers are trained for country life and understand its needs. They enter upon their tasks, knowing that they have time to rear well and fundamentally. This results in a community leadership which cannot be hoped from peripatetic teachers, as is the case with teachers in most American school districts who remain in country schools for a term or two, and use them as stepping-stones to town-school teaching or other occupations. Danish rural districts can count hundreds of teachers who would not exchange their positions for a first-class inspectorship in Copenhagen—all because they have been enabled by these fortunate arrangements to hew out for themselves, where they are, an important niche in the educational life of the people [20, pp. 138-40].

In our educational world there is a general acceptance of Schurman's assertions that "we cannot teach what we do not know," and that "we cannot teach as much as we know," for much is lost in the process of transition. Hence it is generally agreed that a teacher should at least have completed the division of our educational system above that in which she would teach. Thus it is not too much to demand that elementary teachers should have completed the high school. Present opinion would add that professional training in an approved teacher-training institution is a necessary part of an adequate preparation. For high-school teachers, it is not too much to demand that they have completed a college course or its equivalent. Present opinion would add that they should have special training in the subjects they would teach, together with instruction in the principles and practice of teaching.

A decade ago low standards and lack of uniformity, according to Cubberly, were the chief weaknesses of our system of certification. "In more than half of the states of the Union it is possible to secure a teacher's certificate and become a teacher with no other educational equipment than a knowledge of the common-school subjects—the merest rudiments of an education. In about one-fourth of the states no examination upon topics of a professional nature is required, and the prospective teacher apparently is not expected to know anything as to the professional side of his or her calling" (9, p. 29). Just how much has been gained in these ten

years can only be conjectured; however, the following citations indicate a hopeful awakening.

After May 1, 1917, Idaho makes high-school graduation the standard requirement for all applicants for county certificates. Since July 1, 1915, Iowa has required all applicants to have at least 12 weeks of normal training. Kansas has been raising her standards until she now demands that after May 1, 1919, all teachers shall have at least a high-school preparation. Excepting those with 18 months of successful experience, or graduation from normal or college, after August 1, 1915, all candidates in Minnesota "must have completed a professional course of training for teaching—but not to exceed 36 weeks" (21, p. 393). Missouri has been raising the standard until she requires all applicants after September 1, 1916, to have completed three years of an accredited high school or equivalent; after September 1, 1918, such applicants must have completed four years or equivalent (21, p. 397). In Ohio, applicants for life certificates after January 1, 1915, shall possess the equivalent of one year in normal or college, and after January 1, 1920, two years of such work, not less than one-fourth of which shall be in educational subjects.

Applicants for a one-year or a three-year elementary, high-school, or special certificate shall possess professional training not less than the following: after January 1, 1915, not less than 6 weeks of classroom instruction in recognized institution for training of teachers; after January 1, 1916, 12 weeks; after January 1, 1917, 18 weeks; after January 1, 1918, 24 weeks; after January 1, 1919, 30 weeks; after January 1, 1920, 1 year. Applicants for a one-year or a three-year elementary certificate shall have had at least 1 year's training in approved high school, and after January 1, 1920, 2 years of such training. Applicants for a one-year or a three-year high-school or special certificate shall have had at least 1 year's training in approved high school; after January 1, 1920, certificates of graduation from a first-class high school [21, pp. 408-9].

Oklahoma requires:

After January 1, 1916, no person shall receive a third-grade certificate who has not had an academic training equivalent to one year in an approved high school or at least 10 weeks in an approved professional school . . . no second-grade certificate unless two years of high-school training, or 20 weeks of professional training; no first-grade unless three years of high-school training, or 36 weeks of professional training [21, p. 412].

Wisconsin has made the following specific requirements:

On and after July 1, 1915, no person who shall not have taught in a public school for at least one year shall be granted a country or city teacher's certificate, unless, in addition to passing subjects required by law for such certificate, he shall have completed the state common-course of study, or its equivalent, and shall have had two additional years of instruction in training, one year of which, or its equivalent, shall have been devoted to teacher's professional studies, but graduates of four-year high schools not maintaining training course for teachers shall be required to have one year of training in professional studies, such two years of additional training may be obtained at a state normal school, a county training school, or a free high school having an approved course of study for teachers [21, p. 426].

Since 1907 Indiana has required all beginners to have completed high school and have had 12 weeks' professional training. For the three-cent wage 24 weeks of professional work is required; and for the three and one-half cent wage, graduation from a teacher-training institution. New York demands that—

no person shall be employed or licensed to teach in primary and grammar schools of any city or district employing a superintendent who has not had successful experience in teaching for at least three years, or in lieu thereof has not completed prescribed course in a state normal school of the state, passed an examination for and received a life state certificate, completed an approved high-school course of not less than four years, and in addition an approved professional course of not less than two years [21, p. 405].

California has reached the highest standards, in that elementary teachers must have high-school preparation and full normal training, and high-school teachers must have completed college and have one year of graduate study, one-half of which is in educational work.

Our educational experience has taught us that low standards of certification and low wages go together. As long as low standards of certification and low wages dominate our school system, so long must short terms of service and constant recruiting of the ranks characterize our teaching population. Many superintendents state that the best-prepared teachers remain longest in the profession, though they offer no statistics showing the extent of this factor. The history of education, including the present-day systems of France and Prussia, shows that the social status of the teacher varies directly with the professional training and fitness on

the part of the teacher, and adequate return in salary and social esteem on the part of the state (22). The requirement of higher standards of certification is an educational problem; the payment of a just wage is an economic problem depending for its solution on how much money the state will pay for professional training and fitness. If the state required high qualifications and gave in return adequate salary and social esteem, including tenure during efficiency and freedom from dread of dependency and old age, teaching would become not only a stable, but a learned profession, for, as the experience of France has demonstrated, with small need for recruits, training schools could then provide trained teachers for all vacancies.

E. SUMMARY

In the section on the educational qualifications of the teaching population the statistics showed that the educational unpreparedness of the teaching population was the most serious weakness in our school system. Table I and Chart I give for the states represented 60 per cent with high-school preparation or less, and 40 per cent with more than high-school preparation, only a part of which can be called professional training. Owing to recent legislation requiring professional training, Wisconsin, as presented in Table II and Chart II, has a much higher proportion of teachers with more or less professional training.

Chart V presents the data on the educational qualifications, tenure, and experience from states able to furnish data on two or more of these topics. Column I gives in black bars the percentage with preparation beyond the high school, which includes more or less professional training; the striped bars indicate the additional percentage with full high-school preparation. Louisiana had insufficient data for the high-school education column. Missouri shows that 72 per cent of town teachers and 21 per cent of the country teachers were high-school graduates—a part of whom are included under professional training.

Column II presents the percentage of teachers who taught in the same district two years or less. The average of the ten cases is 54.25 per cent serving two years or less in the same district. This is in agreement with the findings in the preceding section that

rural teachers remain less than two years of 140 days each, that 40 per cent of high-school teachers are new each year, and that 50 per cent have a tenure two years or less, and superintendents have a median tenure of barely two years.

Column III states the percentage with three years' experience or less. The average of the nine cases is 50.7 per cent with three years' experience or less.

Just how much correlation there is between the three topics has not been worked out. In the case of the town teachers in Missouri with 74 per cent with professional training and 72 per cent with high-school preparation, only 42 per cent have served two years or less, and only 32 per cent with three years' experience or less. In the city schools of Wisconsin only 38.5 per cent have served two years or less; data for total experience would probably have shown the same tendency. In the country schools of Missouri with 56 per cent having some professional training and 21 per cent with high-school preparation, 84 per cent have served two years or less and 65 per cent have three years' or less teaching experience. In the Wisconsin rural schools with 50.7 per cent with professional training, 88 per cent have served two years or less, and 66 per cent have had three years' or less teaching experience. There seems to be a closer correlation between training and total teaching experience for shift of position depends on things other than preparation. In order to raise the standards of qualification, it will be necessary to require that teachers secure adequate academic and professional training for the special work of teaching; that communities make it more profitable for teachers of merit to remain permanently in their service; and that the state raise standards of certifications and give salary and social esteem sufficient to retain permanently in the profession those persons specially fitted by nature and training for the high calling of the instruction of youth.

CONCLUSIONS

The following are some of the more obvious implications suggested by the foregoing data:

1. Education administrative agencies do not have sufficient funds available for the collection and tabulation of statistical data on educational problems.

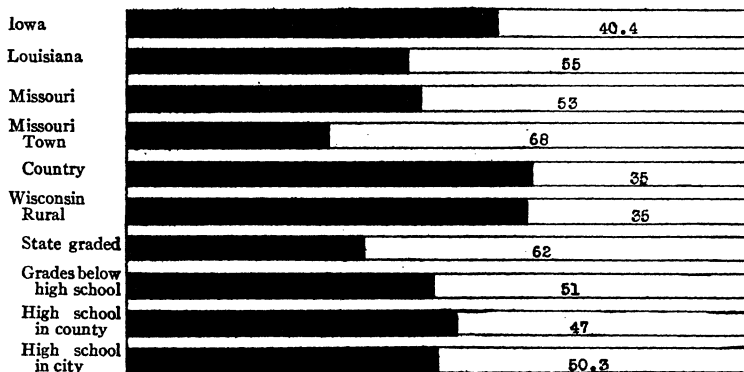


CHART IV.—Black bars indicate three years' experience or less; figures indicate percentage with more than three years' experience. Figures show percentages.

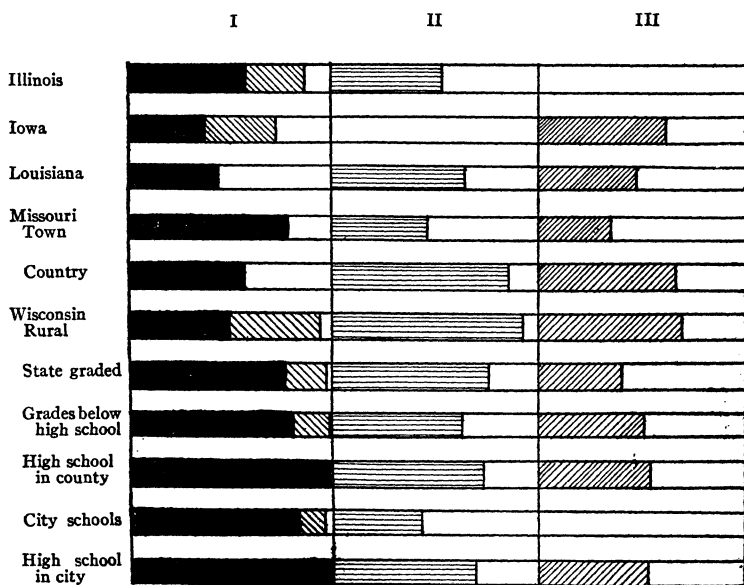


CHART V.—Summary of the preceding tables

Column I: Educational preparation. Black bars, professional training; stripes, high school.—
Column II: Length of service in same district, horizontal bars, two years or less.—Column III: Years
of experience, diagonal bars, three or less.

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2. The data generally collected are insufficient to cover the whole field of educational problems, and their arrangement curtails much of their usefulness. One notes with great interest the growing tendency to remedy the above objections, e.g., the reports of Missouri and Wisconsin.

3. The available data on the educational qualifications of the teaching population indicate a serious lack of academic and professional training. In some parts of the United States the average education of teachers is not above the seventh grade; in general, 60 per cent or more of the teachers have not completed a normal or college course. Rarely has practice come up even to the minimum standards raised for entering the ranks.

4. The constant shift and short tenures of teachers and administrative agencies prevent the development of a permanent, well-laid educational policy either in a community or in a commonwealth.

5. However much or little we value experience, we must conclude that the total term of teaching service is far too brief for the majority of teachers in the United States to have passed through the crude apprenticeship stage.

6. The present educational tendency demands both academic and professional training for teachers, longer tenure in a position, and permanent service in the profession. Comparison with Continental countries reveals the fact that we have neither a learned nor a stable, mature teaching population. In Chancellor Eliot's happy phrase, "We do not have a teaching profession so much as a teaching procession."